

## Message Text

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R 261407Z MAY 78  
FM AMCONSUL MUNICH  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0372  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMCONSUL BREMEN  
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT  
AMCONSUL HAMBURG  
AMCONSUL STUTTGART  
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MUNICH 02557

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, GW  
SUBJECT: IS A NEW CSU FOURTH-PARTY EFFORT IN THE MAKING?

REF: BONN 9213

1. IN THIS MESSAGE, WHICH HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH  
EMBASSY BONN, WE EXAMINE TWO POINTS: (A) THE TOP CSU  
LEADERSHIP'S THINKING RE A POSSIBLE CSU CAMPAIGN OUTSIDE  
BAVARIA, PERHAPS FRG-WIDE, IN THE JUNE 1979 DIRECT  
ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT OR IN THE 1980  
BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS; AND (B) SOME OF THE PRACTICAL  
DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE CDU WOULD FACE IF, IN RESPONSE TO  
A CSU CHALLENGE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS, IT  
DECIDES TO CONTEST THE BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTIONS ON  
OCTOBER 15, 1978.

2. CSU RATIONALE FOR A FOURTH-PARTY STRATEGY  
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(A) THE BASIC PURPOSE UNDERLYING THE CSU'S FOURTH PARTY  
STRATEGY IS TO ENABLE THE CDU AND THE CSU TO GAIN CONTROL  
OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NEXT BUNDESTAG ELEC-  
TIONS. THE CSU LEADERSHIP PROCEEDS FROM TWO ASSUMPTIONS:

(1) UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, THE UNION IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY TO

WIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS, AND

(2) THE FDP IS NEITHER READY NOR ABLE TO GIVE UP ITS NATIONAL COALITION WITH THE SPD IN FAVOR OF AN ALLIANCE WITH THE UNION. HENCE, THE IMMEDIATE AIM OF THE FOURTH-PARTY PLAN IS TO WIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF SEATS IN THE BUNDESTAG.

(B) STRAUSS AND HIS CLOSEST ASSOCIATES (TANDLER AND ZIMMERMANN) APPEAR TO BE CONVINCED THAT THE BEST WAY TO ASSURE A UNION MAJORITY IN THE NEXT BUNDESTAG IS TO ELIMINATE THE FDP FROM THAT BODY--I.E., TO PREVENT THE FDP FROM GAINING MORE THAN FIVE PERCENT OF THE VOTES. MATHEMATICALLY, THIS ARGUMENT IS PLAUSIBLE: WITHOUT AN FDP CAUCUS, THE BUNDESTAG MAJORITY WOULD PROBABLY REST WITH THE CDU AND THE CSU. STRAUSS AND HIS ASSOCIATES ALSO APPEAR CONVINCED THAT ELIMINATING THE FDP WOULD ENABLE THE CDU AND THE CSU TO REMAIN IN POWER FOR A LONGER PERIOD.

(C) BECAUSE THE FDP HAS SURMOUNTED THE FIVE-PERCENT BARRIER IN ALL BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS, STRAUSS AND HIS LIEUTENANTS BELIEVE THAT THE UNION PARTIES MUST EMPLOY NEW TACTICS TO DRIVE THE LIBERALS BELOW THE FIVE-PERCENT MARK. THEY SEE A FOURTH-PARTY EFFORT AS THE MOST EFFICACIOUS TACTIC FOR THIS PURPOSE.  
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(D) THE CSU BELIEVES THAT BY MOUNTING A FOURTH-PARTY EFFORT IN THE NEXT BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS, IN WHICH IT WOULD COMPETE SEPARATELY IN EACH LAND OR AT LEAST IN THE MAJOR LAENDER, IT COULD WOO AWAY A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF "NATIONAL LIBERALS" FROM THE FDP. CSU LEADERS MAY ALSO BELIEVE THAT A CDU, RUNNING PARALLEL WITH THE CSU BUT NOT LINKED TO IT IN A UNION, COULD SIPHON OFF MORE THAN A FEW LIBERAL FDP VOTES. CSU HEADQUARTERS HERE CLAIM TO HAVE PROFESSIONAL POLLS INDICATING THAT THE FDP WOULD HAVE TO FEAR FOR ITS SURVIVAL, IF THE CSU MOUNTED A FOURTH-PARTY EFFORT. CDU SOURCES IN BONN, HOWEVER, CLAIM THAT THEIR PRIVATE POLLS ARE INCOMPLETE AND INCONCLUSIVE RE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS WHICH A FOURTH-PARTY EFFORT WOULD BRING FOR THE UNION.

(E) STRAUSS ALSO BELIEVES THAT, AS A FOURTH PARTY, THE CSU WOULD INCREASE ITS STRENGTH AND WEIGHT VIS-A-VIS THE CDU. INDEED, THE CSU HAS ALREADY ENHANCED ITS POSITION VIS-A-VIS ALL PARTIES BY THREATENING TO LAUNCH A NATIONAL EFFORT.

(F) SOME ELEMENTS IN THE CSU LEADERSHIP (TANDLER FOR SURE, AND POSSIBLY STRAUSS AND ZIMMERMANN) BELIEVE THAT KEY FDP LEADERS, IF THEY COULD BE PERSUADED THAT THEIR

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PARTY MIGHT NOT GAIN ENOUGH VOTES TO ENTER THE NEXT BUNDESTAG, MIGHT BE READY TO MAKE A BINDING COMMITMENT TO SWITCH ALLIANCES IN BONN. THE TRADEOFF WOULD BE A CSU COMMITMENT NOT TO MOUNT A FOURTH-PARTY EFFORT. RECENT PRESS REPORTS SPECULATE THAT STRAUSS AND GENSCHER ARE ENGAGING IN PRIVATE MEETINGS WHICH MAY DEAL, INTER ALIA, WITH THIS SUBJECT. HOWEVER, THERE ARE TWO MAJOR DIFFICULTIES WITH THIS PROPOSITION: (1) THERE IS AS YET NO HARD EVIDENCE SHOWING HOW A FOURTH-PARTY WOULD AFFECT FDP FORTUNES, AND (2) EVEN IF THE FDP WERE INCLINED TO SWITCH PARTNERS IN BONN, IT LACKS A PLAUSIBLE EXCUSE WHICH IT COULD USE TO HOLD ITS MEMBERS IN LINE.

3. CDU ATTITUDES TOWARD A CSU FOURTH-PARTY EFFORT.

(A) IN THEIR DECEMBER 1976 "EINIGUNGSPAPIER", WHICH ENDED THE KREUTH SECESSION DISPUTE BY REESTABLISHING A JOINT CDU/CSU FRAKTION IN THE NEW BUNDESTAG, THE CDU  
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AND THE CSU AGREED NOT TO CAMPAIGN IN EACH OTHER'S TERRITORY WITHOUT PRIOR, MUTUAL AGREEMENT. THEY ALSO COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO WIN THE NEXT BUNDESTAG ELECTION. UNLESS THE UPCOMING LANDTAG ELECTIONS--ABOVE ALL, THE HESSIAN ONE IN OCTOBER--MOVE THE FDP SIGNIFICANTLY CLOSER TO THE CDU/CSU, STRAUSS WILL ARGUE THAT A FOURTH PARTY IS THE UNION'S BEST CHANCE TO AVOID ANOTHER NEAR-MISS A LA 1976. STRAUSS WOULD HOPE TO HAVE SUPPORT FROM LEADING CDU FIGURES, SUCH AS DREGGER. INDEED, ALL CSU LEADERS WOULD STRONGLY PREFER TO LAUNCH A FOURTH-PARTY IN COOPERATION WITH THE CDU, OR AT LEAST IMPORTANT SEGMENTS THEREOF.

(B) THE CDU PREFERS TO CONTINUE THE TRADITIONAL DIVISION OF LABOR, BY WHICH THE CSU REPRESENTS THE UNION IN BAVARIA AND THE CDU REPRESENTS THE UNION IN ALL OTHER LAENDER. THE CDU HAS NOT COMPLETELY RULED OUT A FOURTH-PARTY APPROACH, BUT IT STRONGLY WANTS TO HOLD BACK ON DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT UNTIL AFTER THE LANDTAG ELECTIONS IN 1978 AND--IF POSSIBLE--NEXT SPRING (BERLIN, RHINELAND-PALATINATE, AND SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN). ANY DISCUSSION NEXT SPRING, HOWEVER, WOULD BE COMPLICATED BY PREPARATIONS FOR TWO OTHER ELECTIONS: THE BUNDESVERSAMMLUNG (FEDERAL ASSEMBLY) WILL PICK THE NEXT FEDERAL PRESIDENT IN MAY, AND DIRECT ELECTIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WILL OCCUR IN JUNE.

5. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS: TEST RUN FOR A CSU FOURTH PARTY EFFORT?

THE CSU LEADERSHIP APPARENTLY SEES AT LEAST THREE ADVANTAGES ACCRUING FROM AN FRG-WIDE CSU CAMPAIGN IN THE MAY 1979 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS:  
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- (A) SUCH AN EFFORT WOULD TEST THE CSU CONTENTION THAT THE PARTY ACTUALLY DOES HAVE VOTE-GETTING ABILITY OUTSIDE BAVARIA;
- (B) SUCH A CSU EFFORT WOULD BREAK THE ICE FOR SUBSEQUENT CSU CAMPAIGNS OUTSIDE BAVARIA; AND
- (C) SUCH AN EFFORT COULD STAMPEDE THE FDP INTO CHANGING COALITION PARTNERS IN BONN.

6. POSSIBLE CDU EFFORT IN OCTOBER 15 BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTIONS

(A) THE CDU IS DETERMINED NOT TO SUFFER ANOTHER CSU SURPRISE A LA KREUTH. KOHL AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARGUE THAT THE EINIGUNGSPAPIER ALSO COVERS THE 1979 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS. THEY HAVE LET IT BE KNOWN THAT, IF THE CSU DECIDES ON ITS OWN TO CONTEST THE ELECTIONS OUTSIDE BAVARIA, THE CDU WILL RETALIATE BY ENTERING THE OCTOBER 15 BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTIONS. IN ORDER FOR THIS THREAT TO BE CREDIBLE, THE CDU MUST SOON MAKE ITS DECISION. HENCE, THE CDU IS PUSHING HARD FOR A CLEAR AND SATISFACTORY ANSWER RE CSU INTENTIONS IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS. THE CDU HOPES TO HAVE THIS ANSWER SOON, PERHAPS AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE JOINT CDU/CSU STRATEGY COMMISSION, NOW SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 8.

(B) IF THE CDU WERE TO ENTER THE BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTION, ITS GOAL WOULD BE TO OBTAIN A LARGE ENOUGH PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE TO PREVENT THE CSU FROM WINNING AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF SEATS IN THE LANDTAG. UNLESS A CDU THREAT TO ENTER BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTIONS HAD THE EFFECT OF FRIGHTENING, PERHAPS EVEN PANICKING, A NUMBER

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OF CSU OFFICE HOLDERS, THE CDU WOULD, IN FACT, FACE ALMOST INSURMOUNTABLE ORGANIZATIONAL DIFFICULTIES IN MOUNTING A VIABLE CAMPAIGN.

(C) THE BAVARIAN LAW REGULATING LANDTAG ELECTION CAMPAIGNS GIVES EACH VOTER TWO VOTES, THE FIRST FOR A DIRECT CANDIDATE FOR EACH OF THE 104 ELECTORAL DISTRICTS AND THE SECOND FOR THE CANDIDATE LIST FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE AREA (REGIERUNGSBEZIRK). (BAVARIA IS DIVIDED INTO SEVEN ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS.) IN CONTRAST TO THE TWO-VOTE SYSTEM USED IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS, IN WHICH IT IS THE SECOND VOTE WHICH DETERMINES THE NUMBER OF DEPUTIES EACH INDIVIDUAL PARTY SENDS TO THE BUNDESTAG, IN THE BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTION SYSTEM, BOTH THE FIRST AND THE SECOND VOTE CARRY EQUAL WEIGHT IN DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF DEPUTIES EACH PARTY SENDS TO THE LANDTAG.

(D) IF THE CDU CHOSE NOT RPT NOT TO FIELD CANDIDATES IN  
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EACH INDIVIDUAL ELECTION DISTRICT, IT WOULD, IN EFFECT, GIVE EACH OF ITS WOULD-BE VOTERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE THE PARTY ONLY ONE VOTE INSTEAD OF A POSSIBLE TWO VOTES. IF THE CDU WERE TO DECIDE TO COMPETE FOR FIRST VOTES, IT WOULD HAVE TO ACCOMPLISH THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE TASK OF FINDING (BY LATE SEPTEMBER) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS TO BE DIRECT CANDIDATES IN EACH OF THE 104 ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

(E) THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CVU (MUNICH A-77 OF OCTOBER 20, 1977, AND PREVIOUS), WHICH CLAIMED THAT ITS PROGRAM WAS IDENTICAL TO THAT OF THE CDU, IN THE MARCH 5 BAVARIAN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS SUGGESTS THAT THE CDU WOULD FACE AN UPHILL STRUGGLE IN ESTABLISHING AN ORGANIZATION AT THE GRASS ROOTS IN BAVARIA.

(F) AS WE READ THE SITUATION HERE, THE CDU'S ONLY REALISTIC HOPE FOR MOUNTING A MEANINGFUL EFFORT IN THE COMING BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTIONS WOULD BE TO SPARK THE DEFECTION OF A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF INTACT CSU REGIONAL UNITS TOGETHER WITH THEIR LEADERS. ALTHOUGH THERE DOES SEEM TO BE SOME LATENT PRO-CDU SENTIMENT IN MIDDLE FRANCONIA, BAVARIAN SWABIA, AND PERHAPS ALSO MUNICH AND NUERNBERG, WE ARE SKEPTICAL THAT THE CDU LEADERSHIP COULD ENGINEER THE LARGE-SCALE DEFECTIONS NECESSARY TO KEEP THE CSU FROM WINNING A MAJORITY IN THE NEXT BAVARIAN LANDTAG.

(G) IN SUM, WE CONCLUDE THAT THE CDU THREAT TO ENTER THE OCTOBER BAVARIAN LANDTAG CAMPAIGN IS LARGELY PSYCHOLOGICAL. FOR THE CSU AND THE CDU RESPECTIVELY, THE VALUE AND THE MENACE OF THE FOURTH-PARTY EFFORT LIES AS MUCH IN THE THREAT AS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION. SPARRING

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BETWEEN THE UNION PARTIES WILL LIKELY GO ON FOR  
A WHILE, WITHOUT RESULT. THE CDU'S ONLY REAL HOPE WOULD  
BE TO FRIGHTEN A MAJORITY OF CSU FUNCTIONARIES AND MEMBERS  
INTO PASSING A RESOLUTION AT THEIR JUNE 16-17 CONVENTION  
WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT PARTY LEADERS FROM LAUNCHING A CSU  
CAMPAIGN OUTSIDE BAVARIA. TO DATE, WE SEE NO SIGN THAT  
THE CSU CONVENTION WILL TAKE SUCH A STEP.  
GILMORE

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